

mean certain death. Ignoring the danger, Lucius continued to work in the compartments adjacent to the ammunition stockpiles. Mr. President, 125 members of the *Saratoga* lost their lives that day.

Lucius remained aboard the *Saratoga* for the rest of the war. After the Japanese surrendered, he returned home, married Rita Bourgeois of Gonzales, LA, raised 5 children, and today is blessed with 21 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

The other Louisiana veteran I would like to recognize is Robert "Emmett" Stanley. Born in New Orleans in 1923, Emmett left home shortly after graduating from high school to serve the United States. He enlisted in the Navy Reserve in 1943 and served as a seaman first class on the USS *Luce*.

On the morning of May 4, 1945, 1 day after Emmett's 22nd birthday, Japanese kamikaze pilots attacked the USS *Luce*. Emmett was knocked to the deck as shrapnel pierced his scalp through his steel helmet and fragmented pieces went into his legs. He still feels pain from those injuries today.

Emmett and the other crew members were soon given orders to abandon the USS *Luce* after more kamikazes struck. Emmett swam 40 yards away from the sinking ship to avoid being sucked under by the waves, but a second explosion forced more shrapnel into his stomach. Out of the 312 men on the USS *Luce*, 126 were killed in the attack.

Although eligible then, Emmett did not receive his Purple Heart until October 17 of this year, when he was the honoree at the U.S. Navy Birthday Ball. He was thrilled to be surrounded by his entire family.

These are two stories about heroism and valor, but there are many more. Let me brag a little bit about a couple of young men who work on my staff.

One young man, Chris Anderson, enlisted in the Army after completing his college education. He could have pursued business or graduate school, but Chris wanted to serve our country in the War on Terror. He did so bravely and honorably in Afghanistan clearing ordnance. Imagine what his mother thought every night, knowing the job he had. Now he is a tireless advocate for VA reform so that those he served with can get the care they need and deserve.

Another member of my staff back in Baton Rouge, Michael Eby, served in the Louisiana National Guard for 9 years and was awarded the National Defense Medal and the Louisiana War Cross.

To Lucius, Emmett, Chris, and Michael and all who served and serve now, thank you for your service. This Veterans Day and every day, we remember your sacrifices, courage, and dedication to ensuring that our children, their children, and we all can live in freedom in the greatest Nation in the world. May God bless you, your families, and the United States of America.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). The Senator from Pennsylvania.

CHILD POVERTY

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to talk about a set of issues we don't, frankly, spend enough time on that relate to our children. I have often said—and I think it is true throughout this Chamber when we talk about these issues—that we come to this because we are concerned about the future of this country when we talk about what happens to our children.

I have always believed—and I think this is a prevailing point of view here in this Chamber and across the country—that every child is born with a light inside them, the light of the full measure of their potential. Some children don't need a lot of help along the way. They are born into circumstances or into families or born to parents or there are other factors that give them an advantage. They have a lot of ability, and they do not need much in the way of intervention from any part of our society, including the government. Some children are born with a bright light, but it may not burn as brightly or shine as brightly as some other kids, and they need a little extra help. Some of those kids, if they get help when they are very young, can thrive and succeed and grow without any further help or assistance.

If we are serious about growing the economy, if we are serious about creating jobs and creating the kind of opportunity that we say we are concerned about and that we say is part of the fabric of being an American, then we have to be concerned about what happens to our kids.

A lot of what I will talk about today can be summarized in maybe one line: As kids learn more now, they are going to earn more later. We know all the data shows that. The child who has access to early learning will earn more later in life. It also is essential that they have access to quality health care and the kind of security that comes when you have enough to eat—food security.

If we want our children to learn more now and earn more later, we have to make the right investments. Unfortunately, that child or any child won't be able to learn more now and therefore earn more later if they live a life of poverty. Maybe some will get through, but that is very difficult. If we don't take action against child poverty, we have already erected barriers in their path.

Today, as of 2014, the latest numbers for child poverty in the United States are 21.1 percent. That number is up substantially since the great recession—a couple of percentage points—and therefore there are millions more children living in poverty.

In Pennsylvania, it is only a little lower—19.4 percent. No one here would

try to make the case that is acceptable, that 21 percent of children living in poverty is something we can accept. We should all be not only outraged by it but take action and have a sense of urgency to combat it.

There are a couple of things we can do. First of all, we have to know what is happening to children on a broad range of topics. That is why we have to rely upon public policy expertise. There is a whole group of folks out there in organizations. I am holding in my hand just one example. You can't see it from a distance, but this is a kind of one-page summary by the Annie E. Casey Foundation—no relation to me but a great foundation that has tracked child well-being for years. They have four categories: economic well-being, education, health, and the fourth category is family and community.

If you could see this up close, you would notice some categories. There are 16 altogether, with 4 indicators in 4 categories.

If you look at the orange, wherever you see orange, that means the numbers are getting worse for children. If you see green, that means we are doing better. So it is a mixed report, with some numbers getting better over the last 5 years or 7 years or time increments such as that. But what has gotten worse since the great recession is that the number of children living in poverty has gone up. The number of children whose parents lack secure employment has gone up. Unfortunately, two other indicators of poverty—children in single-parent families is up, meaning the number has worsened, and children living in high-poverty areas is worse.

I won't go into those numbers today, but that is just an indication that childhood poverty has been a challenge for a long time. It got a lot worse after the great recession, when our economy began to collapse and folks across the country paid the price, and a lot of children have paid the price.

So what do we do about it? One thing we do is to begin to see that at long last we can't just talk about reducing child poverty. We can't just nibble around the edges or hope a program here or a program there will help. We have to have a strategy. In order to have a strategy, we have to have a goal, and the goal ought to be that we reduce child poverty and take the same approach, frankly, the United Kingdom took a couple of years ago.

I will walk through some of the background, but Senator BALDWIN and Senator BROWN and I introduced a bill just last week—the Child Poverty Reduction Act—to establish that kind of a target to reduce child poverty. Under the legislation, child poverty would be cut in half in 10 years. So child poverty would be cut in half in a decade. The second goal would be to eliminate child poverty in 20 years. Deep poverty would be eliminated in 10 years—meaning the worst kind of poverty for our children and for our families.

To meet these goals, we would give an assignment to an interagency working group to reduce child poverty, to develop a plan, and include recommendations to improve coordination and efficiency of existing programs and initiatives, because there are a lot of them—and we can get to those in a moment—along with recommendations for new legislation, new strategies, and new approaches to focus on child poverty.

Here is what happened in the United Kingdom. In 1999, the UK established a national child poverty target and measured in U.S. terms the UK's child poverty target, and the policy changes made in conjunction with that effort reduced Britain's child poverty rate by 50 percent in the first 10 years—a significant achievement. In comparison, between 2000 and 2013—a little more than a decade—in the United States, the child poverty rate increased by over 20 percent. So roughly in the same time period, as our poverty rate was going up for kids, the UK's poverty rate for children was going down. One of the reasons for that—not the only reason—is they set a target, and both sides came together—the labor party, the conservatives—and the country made it a goal. We haven't done that yet, and we need to focus on that kind of a goal.

So one thing we need to do is to focus on a goal and have legislation to enact part of the strategy. Then, of course, we can't just stop there. We can't just assume having a target and working toward it is enough.

One of the most powerful examples in my home State of Pennsylvania over the last couple of years of what it means to live in poverty—in this case, moms who were willing to tell their stories—is the effort undertaken by Witnesses to Hunger. That is what this photograph depicts—a child who was photographed by her mother. Other mothers were willing to take pictures of their children to tell the world about their own circumstances and to give us living proof of what it means to live in poverty, what it means to be a child living in poverty. That is Witnesses to Hunger.

This all started at Drexel University, where they gave cameras to a group of moms who decided to open up their own lives, courageously and generously, and to tell us more about these challenges.

The first picture after that is a picture of a young woman by the name of Monique who is on her way to her local WIC office—the Women, Infants, and Children Program—the office in this part of Philadelphia. Monique says: “I love WIC because it supports me by helping me nurse my baby.” That is a picture of her and her baby.

The next picture is a picture of a group of classmates, and the mom's name is Shearine. Shearine's daughter joins her classmates in this photo. Here is what Shearine says about her circumstances and what she hopes for the future:

My daughter and her classmates are symbols of change. They have hope for a brighter future and faith that the adults in their lives will work together to make a change. We must do whatever it takes so that they can grow up and be strong, educated adults.

I think Shearine gave us all an assignment, not just speaking to herself. I think she gave us all an assignment that we have to make sure we are taking the steps necessary and essential to do all we can to give that bright future and to validate the faith those children have in us, whether we are going to meet our obligations to help those children—every single one of those children—in that class picture.

Finally, the last picture is of a young boy giving his mother Gale a great smile. In this photo, Gale captures her son's happiness as he holds up nutritious bananas. It is good to have that in the picture. When we talk about child poverty and hunger, it is not just some public policy issue, some issue for a think tank to analyze. Child poverty is depicted in some of these pictures, but it is also in our newspapers every day of the week and in our midst. I hope more of us will be summoned by our conscience to do something constructively about this issue.

We have a lot to do in the next couple of months. We have child nutrition reauthorization, which is a great opportunity for us to, at long last, begin to take steps in the right direction.

The Women, Infants, and Children Program I mentioned before is one of those. One reason I am so concerned about where we are in the WIC Program is that some children literally are caught in a nutrition gap. Because they are age 5, they may be caught in a gap where they are not getting school meals and they are not getting nutrition any other way. Some children can experience this nutrition gap almost 12 months, almost a year being caught because they turned 5. The time in this nutrition gap is a time when they are neither supported by WIC nor supported by a school meals program.

We had the privilege recently of talking to a constituent from Western Pennsylvania. Her son is currently 4 years old. He will be enrolled in kindergarten in the fall of 2016. When he enrolls in school, he will get healthy meals, but in the next month when he turns 5, he will be cut off from the opportunity to benefit from the WIC Program. This child loves yogurt, fruit and vegetables and whole grains provided by the WIC Program, but he will not benefit from that because of this glitch in the law. So I propose a new bill, the Wise Investment in our Children Act, the WIC Act, to close the nutrition gap by allowing States to increase the age limit for WIC to age 6.

We also have to be concerned, at the same time focusing on making changes to the WIC Program, to focus on another support for our children and families, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, so-called CACFP, as a quality source of nutrition. For many chil-

dren, the meals they eat in childcare programs are the most nutritious meals they will eat all week. In other words, absent the childcare setting, they will likely not have a nutritious meal in the course of a week. As working families shuttle between home, childcare, and work, little time remains for food shopping, healthy meal planning or sitting down to eat healthy meals. The Child and Adult Care Food Program provides healthy, nutritious meals to more than 3 million children each day who are either in Head Start, Early Head Start or childcare programs in both centers and family childcare homes.

I introduced this bill as well to focus, improve, and strengthen this program. The Child and Adult Care Improvement Act would enhance several aspects of this program, including allowing childcare centers and homes the option of serving a third meal for children who are in care for 8 or more hours a day.

We have a lot to do, but we cannot get to the goal of reducing child poverty by 50 percent or reducing poverty overall in the near term in the next decade, unless we have a strategy, set a goal, and then begin to strengthen what works and improve the existing programs—whether it is WIC, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the SNAP program—what used to be called food stamps. Whatever the program is, we have to strengthen and invest in it. We can't talk about all those lofty terms—like “GDP growth, job growth, and growing economy” and all the wonderful things that get discussed in this Chamber—without a strategy for our kids.

We have a way to go, but I believe this commitment to our children is not just the right thing to do and it is not just something we ought to focus on as something consistent with what our conscience tells us, but it is in fact a great economic strategy for the country. If kids learn more now, they are going to earn more later. They can't learn more now if they don't have access to early learning, if they don't have access to healthy, nutritious foods, if they don't have access to quality health care, and if we don't protect them from people who would do them harm. If we do at least four of those things well—if we have early learning opportunities, opportunities to invest in food security strategies so they get healthy, nutritious foods, and we make sure they have quality health care in addition to early learning, we can move forward in a direction that gets us to the goal of making sure every child in this country has an opportunity to grow and to learn and to move in the future together. We can't do that if all we do in Washington is use phrases like “job creation” and “economic growth” without a strategy to get our kids there. We should make sure every child in this country has the same opportunity to learn and to grow. They can't do that if we as the adults don't give them that opportunity.

So as we look at some of the real lives depicted in these photographs, I think Shearine gave us a very powerful message today, where she said: "They," meaning the children in the picture of the classroom—"They have hope for a brighter future and faith that the adults in their lives will work together to make change."

Shearine is right. She has given me an assignment, she has given 99 other Senators an assignment, and a lot of other adults across the country. I believe this is a mission worthy of a great nation, just like every other major undertaking we have confronted and dealt with over many generations of greatness in our country.

When we talk about American exceptionalism and what it means to be an American, part of being an American is making sure every child has the same opportunity to learn and to grow. We can do this. We can do it in a bipartisan fashion. If the United Kingdom can reduce child poverty, the United States can do the same.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would point out to our colleagues, that we now have now received the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. It amounts to 5,544 pages, not including the dozens of side-agreements—three times the book I know the Presiding Officer knows, the Bible. It is three times the length of the Bible and several times the length of ObamaCare. It has just been delivered to us with all kinds of promises for good things that might result from its affirmation.

No American has the resources to ensure that his or her interests are being protected in this document. It is so long and the ramifications are so broad that Congress cannot do its job to ensure that the people's interests are safeguarded by such an agreement.

We already have trade deals with all the major TPP countries, except Japan. So I will say with real confidence this is much more than trade. If it was, a bilateral agreement with Japan would fix it. We have agreements with Australia, Chile, Canada, and other countries.

The TPP is about the goal of creating a new global regulatory structure—what I have called a Pacific Union—transferring power from individual Americans and Congress, eroding Congress, to an unaccountable, unelected, international bureaucratic committee.

Because President Obama has been given fast-track powers by this Con-

gress—unwisely I think—Congress cannot amend this deal, we cannot strike one offending provision, apply a filibuster to force a supermajority of 60 votes, as we have to have for most legislation, or to apply a two-thirds treaty vote. Additionally, the White House writes the implementing legislation, which, in turn, necessarily supersedes any existing American law. So this is what we mean by fast-track.

Today I would like to share a few thoughts about one aspect of this agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership Commission. There is a particular chapter in this mammoth agreement, chapter 27, titled—innocuously enough—"Administrative and Institutional Provisions," which deals with the creation of a Trans-Pacific Partnership Commission.

Section 27.1 outlines the creation of this Commission and who is a member. The agreement states that "each party shall be responsible for the composition of its delegation." In other words, we are empowering the Trans-Pacific Partnership countries to create a new congress of sorts—a group with delegates that goes and meets and decides important issues that can impact everyday lives of Americans. The American representative in this Commission, which will operate in many ways like the U.N., will not be answerable to voters anywhere. How long will their terms be? How will they be chosen? Will there be any restrictions on lobbying, any requirements of transparency? Can they always meet in secret? Are there any ethics rules? The answer is, it will be whatever the TPP countries decide it will be.

The fact that they negotiated this in secret for months—years, really—indicates that transparency is not a quality they value very highly. It is an entity untethered above and outside the Constitution of the United States. All our government agencies in the United States must answer to the Congress and the President, the Chief Executive. These institutions will not. So we need to be cautious.

All I am saying is, why do we have to do this? Why do we have to create a Commission in which Vietnam or the Sultan of Brunei gets the same vote as the President of the United States?

Section 27.2 lists several powers of the Commission which should be expected in any regulatory body. It is granted the power to oversee the implementation of the TPP and the power to supervise the work of relevant working groups under its jurisdiction. However, then the section states this: Under the rules, the Commission shall "consider any proposal to amend or modify this Agreement," to change the agreement. They get to change the agreement. We can ratify this, but they get to change it whenever they deem appropriate. Also, the Commission shall "seek the advice of non-governmental persons or groups on any matter falling within the Commission's functions" and "take such other action

as the Parties may agree," while considering "input from non-governmental persons or groups of the Parties."

It also says it will consider the findings of international fora to help advise them. I guess one of the fora they will not be considering is a group like the National Federation of Independent Business, small businesses.

None of these terms are defined as to what constitutes a nongovernmental person or group. What is that?

Remember, when the Founders of our country negotiated the Constitution, they worried about every word. They thought about what it would mean and could mean decades, centuries later. They talked about creating a new form of government on this entire continent. They actually believed that could be possible, and it certainly has become reality. Have we given that kind of thought to the power we are delegating to this Commission? How will the agreement be amended or modified?

Just last week, the Secretary of State, Secretary Kerry, was in Kazakhstan. He told the television station in Kazakhstan that he is interested in seeing China and Russia be added to the TPP and that they would consider the Philippines a prime candidate to join in the future. That is an interesting thing to announce, particularly in Kazakhstan. Since it impacts the people of the United States, it might be nice for him to be talking more to the people of the United States.

So this would create a situation in which new countries can be added, it appears, most any different way.

The point is, this global governance authority is open-ended. The agreement states that "the Commission and any subsidiary body established under this Agreement may establish rules of procedures for the conduct of its work."

It even covers climate regulation—a lot about climate regulation. The agreement states that "the Parties acknowledge that transition to a low emissions economy requires collective action." Having been a proud cold warrior, I have never been happy with people who use the word "collective." It makes me nervous.

The TPP is a living agreement. According to the U.S. Trade Representative's own Web site, the living agreement provision is in the TPP: "... to enable the updating of the agreement as appropriate to address trade issues that emerge in the future as well as new issues that arise with the expansion of the agreement to include new countries." It says it is to deal with trade issues and new issues. Are those issues nontrade? Are they environmental issues? Are they labor agreements or other kinds of things that are unrelated directly to trade? I think it is clear this would allow that to happen.

Regardless, after the TPP is passed and Congress has blessed the union, the Senate will have no say in how the